

What do you believe?

2 Timothy 1:1-18, 2:1-13, 4:6-8

Learning Objectives

1. The children will identify their faith as the most important part of their life.
2. The children will be able to explain that being a Christian means one takes responsibility for learning more about their faith, making decisions according to their faith, and living their faith each day including praying for opportunities to share that faith with others.

Memory Verse: *“God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ...it is God's gift.”*
--Ephesians 2:8 (NIRV)

Getting Started

(Choose One Activity)

“Do You Believe?” Activity:

See: www.kidssundayschool.com → grade school → activities → “Do You Believe”

You will need to print or make copies of the handout for each child before class.

Please see the above website for detailed instructions. This activity may be done orally (out loud) together, or you may give the children an opportunity to think quietly and write down their answers before discussing together.

Once the children understand or make the connection that they believe in things that they cannot see, read the paragraph at the bottom of the handout to them.

“Flying Fruit” Game:

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Lessons → “Galatians – Faith and the Fruit of the Spirit” → scroll down to the “Flying Fruit” activity.

You will need to bring some real fruit to class—apples, oranges, bananas, grapes, etc., and give everyone one piece of fruit. Please see the above website for detailed instructions. Note: You will likely need to recruit some extra volunteers for this activity. Also, you may need to differentiate between “toss” and “throw” depending on your students.

When you are finished with the nine fruit of the spirit characteristics, have the children sit down. Tell them that today we are going to talk more about one specific characteristic. Give them some clues and see if they can guess. Then proceed with the lesson.

“Famous Last Words” Activity:

See: www.teensundayschool.com → games → “Famous Last Words”

Read the “Famous Last Words” out loud, and see if the students can name the person who said it. Let everyone know the correct answer before reading the next quote. Have the students keep track on their own how many they get right. You will need an award some sort of small prize to the person or persons who get the most right. Please see the above website for more detailed instructions.

After reading through the quotes above, be sure to cover the discussion questions. Then tell the children that in today’s lesson we will explore what it means to be faithful, and hopefully become inspired and more equipped to live a more faithful life each day.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions

Message: *Learn, love and live your faith.*

Note: In today's lesson we learn about the faith of Paul as we read from reading his letters to Timothy.

2 Timothy 1:1-11

I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am an apostle of Christ Jesus just as God planned. He sent me to tell about the promise of life that is found in Christ Jesus.

Timothy, I am sending you this letter. You are my dear son. May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy and peace.

Paul Tells Timothy to Be Faithful

I serve God, knowing that what I know is right. That is how our people served him long ago. Night and day I thank God for you. Night and day I always remember you in my prayers.

I remember your tears. I long to see you so that I can be filled with joy. I remember your honest and true faith. It was alive first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice. And I know that you now have that same faith.

That is why I remind you to use the gift God gave you. God put his gift in you when I placed my hands on you. Now let it grow, just as a small spark grows into a fire. God didn't give us a spirit that makes us afraid. He gave us a spirit that gives us power and love and self-control. So don't be ashamed to tell people about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me. I am in prison for the lord. Instead, join with me as I suffer for the good news. God gives us the strength to do that.

God has saved us and made us His holy people. That wasn't because of anything we have done ourselves. It was because of what He wanted and because of His grace. Through Christ Jesus, God gave us that grace even before time began. It was not shown to us until our Savior Christ Jesus came. He has destroyed death. Because of the good news, He has showed us the way to have life that cannot be destroyed.

I was chosen to tell the good news and to be an apostle and a teacher.

Discussion Questions:

1. Where did Timothy's faith come from (1 Timothy 1:5)? *(His mother and grandmother.)*
2. How did Paul first contribute to Timothy's faith (1 Timothy 1:6)? *(Paul gave Timothy the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of his hands.)*
3. Paul invites Timothy to join in suffering for the "good news" with him. What did this mean for them at that time? *(Paul at the time was in prison. Many times people were persecuted or punished for sharing the good news of Jesus.)*
4. What do think it would mean for you to suffer for the Lord today? *(Discuss together. This depends on what part of the world one lives in. Explain.)*

Continue with the lesson. Tell the children to keep listening for faithfulness words.

1 Timothy 1:12-18

¹² That's why I'm suffering the way I am. But I'm not ashamed. I know the One I have believed in. I am sure He is able to take care of what I have given Him. I can trust Him with it until the day He returns as judge. ¹³ Follow what you heard from me as the pattern of true teaching. Follow it with faith and love because you belong to Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the truth of the good news that you were trusted with. Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. ¹⁵ You know that all the believers in Asia Minor have deserted me. They include Phygelus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶ May the Lord show mercy to all who live in the house of Onesiphorus. He often cheered me up. He was not ashamed that I was being held by

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

chains.¹⁷ In fact, it was just the opposite. When he was in Rome, he looked everywhere for me. At last he found me.¹⁸ May Onesiphorus find mercy from the Lord on the day Jesus returns as judge. You know very well how many ways Onesiphorus helped me in Ephesus.

Discussion Questions:

1. In verse 12 Paul says, “I know in whom I have believed.” What do you think he means by that? How does that demonstrate his faith? (*Discuss together.*)
2. Paul tells Timothy to “keep (verse 13)” and “guard (verse 14)” certain things. How do these words relate to faithfulness? (*Faithfulness is not a one-time thing. It means that over a very long time you remain true to the Lord and our Heavenly Father. You keep your faith, you guard your life, and you persevere in spite of your circumstances. Paul’s advice to Timothy continues in chapter 2.*)

2 Timothy 2:1-13

¹ My son, be strong in the grace that is found in Christ Jesus. ² You have heard me teach in front of many witnesses. Pass on to men you can trust the things you've heard me say. Then they will be able to teach others also.

³ Like a good soldier of Christ Jesus, share in the hard times with us. ⁴ A soldier does not take part in things that don't have anything to do with the army. He wants to please his commanding officer. ⁵ In the same way, anyone who takes part in a sport doesn't receive the winner's crown unless he plays by the rules. ⁶ The farmer who works hard should be the first to receive a share of the crops.

⁷ Think about what I'm saying. The Lord will help you understand what all of it means. ⁸ Remember Jesus Christ. He came from David's family line. He was raised from the dead. That is my good news. ⁹ I am suffering for it. I have even been put in chains like someone who has committed a crime. But God's word is not held back by chains. ¹⁰ So I put up with everything for the good of God's chosen people. Then they also can be saved. Christ Jesus saves them. He gives them glory that will last forever. ¹¹ Here is a saying you can trust. “If we died with Him, we will also live with Him. ¹² If we don't give up, we will also rule with Him. If we say we don't know Him, he will also say He doesn't know us. ¹³ Even if we are not faithful, He will remain faithful. He must be true to Himself.”

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the things that Paul tells Timothy to do in the verses above? (*“Be strong,” “trust,” “endure hardship.”*)
2. What do these statements say about the type of faith Paul is saying Timothy should have? (*We need to have a solid faith, one that does not waiver depending on our circumstances.*)
3. Verse 8 and those that follow reveal where the faith Paul is inviting Timothy to have should come from. Where should it come from? (*Jesus Christ, and the fact that He lives.*)
4. Verse 13 reveals that God always has faith in us. Have you ever thought about that before? What does that mean to you?

Tell the children that God is faithful. It is part of who He is. But He also asks us to be faithful to Him. Paul knows this. He has lived this. And now he passes it on to Timothy in the verses we have read together. But the things he says are relevant to us, too, and we should listen to Paul. Paul knew all about faithfulness. He lived a long and difficult life. But he remained faithful to Jesus Christ the whole time. We know this because his last recorded words come in this letter, just a couple of pages beyond what we've read so far. Turn to 2 Timothy 4. Here Paul puts his money where his mouth is, so to speak. After urging Timothy to be faithful, he gives some insight as to what he is feeling as he writes these last words to his young protégé:

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

2 Timothy 4:6-8

⁶ I am already being poured out like a drink offering. The time has come for me to leave. ⁷ I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is a crown waiting for me. It is given to those who are right with God. The Lord, who judges fairly, will give it to me on the day He returns. He will not give it only to me. He will also give it to all those who are longing for Him to return.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think “the time of my departure is at hand” means? (*The end of his life is near.*)
2. Paul describes his faithfulness as “fighting the fight,” “finishing the course,” “keeping the faith.” Which of those is most profound to you? Why? (*Discuss together.*)
3. What do you think it meant to Paul to say those words at the end of his life?
4. What do you think it meant for Timothy to read those words, knowing what he knew about his mentor, Paul?

Tell the children that faithfulness is a very important part of our lives. To be able to live your life knowing that you are growing each day in your Faith is a wonderful thing. To approach each day of our lives knowing that you have done all you could to bring honor to God and draw others to Him shows that you will have a life full of faith, one that is well-lived.

Application to Real Life

Ask the children if they think their faith would save them? Remind them of the story of Daniel. Daniel was one of the many great men of faith. Although he knew that disobeying a decree from the king meant death, he would not give up his faith, even if it meant giving up his own life. We will never know if Daniel went into the lion's den believing he would survive. We do know that he prayed to God for help, but that could have been a prayer to help to withstand the pain or even to die quickly. In any case, we can know for sure because of his faith that he believed he was in God's care. Having faith in God means to allow Him to be in control of our lives. If we faithfully obey Him and give Him our honor and our praise, He will give us the courage to do whatever He wants us to do. That is why it is so important that we spend some time **learning about our faith, learning to love our faith, and living our faith** each and every day. (See message statement.)

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Activity Ideas

“By Faith” Game

See: www.kidssundayschool.com → grade school → lessons → “The Prophet Daniel – A Reputation of Faith” (look under “alternate class exercise”)

Write each clue that is provided on one index card. This game is similar to charades. Tell the children that all of the answers are about events in the Bible that took great faith. (All of the examples can be found in Hebrews 11.) Please see the above website for detailed instructions.

At the end of the game, remind the children of the faith that occurred in each of the stories above. Ask the children if they would have been able to be as strong with their own faith if they lived through those experiences. Talk about it together.

“Unseen Faith” Activity

See: www.kidssundayschool.com → grade school → object talks → “Unseen Faith”

You will need 2 plastic water bottles and an old glove for this activity. Before class, take an old glove and draw or glue the following letters on the knuckles: F - E - A - R. (You could also use washable markers to write on your own knuckles.) Take the two empty plastic water bottles, and tightly cap one of them. Do not cap the other bottle. You will compare the uncapped bottle to a person without faith, and the capped bottle to a person who has faith. Although faith itself is not visible, what faith produces is easy to see. Please see the above website for more detailed instructions and a guide to the discussion.

Journal Reflection Questions

- Do you ever think about what it might be like to be laying on your death bed? True, the end of our life may come suddenly. But what if you had the opportunity to tell others what you believed in the moments before you died? What do you want to be able to say in those moments? For the next couple of minutes, take time to write a letter. Imagine that, like Paul, death is imminent for you. What do you want to say about your relationship with God? What has your relationship with Him meant to your life? Approach this thoughtfully and honestly. Write about it in your journal.
- What is something you can do this week to live more faithfully? What is something you can STOP doing to be a more faithful follower of our Heavenly Father? Write about it.

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson titled: **World Religions – Part 1** as well as Ephesians 4:32, 1 John 4:7-11, John 13:34-35, and 1 Peter 3:8-9.
- Learn the memory verse: *“In everything, do to others what you would want them to do to you.”*
--Matthew 7:12 (NIRV)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith # ____.
- Make a list of as many names of Christian churches you can think of. On the back of your paper, answer the following question: “What would it look like if you were a totally respectful person? What would you say, do, etc.?” Bring it with you to class next week.

Make a “KWL” Chart:

For this activity, you will need 3 pieces of 8 ½ x 11” paper for each child. Have them turn their paper “sideways” so that the width is 11” and the height is 8 ½”. Then have them tri-fold their paper, so that when they open their paper back up again, it will have 3 columns. Use pencils to draw lines down each column as shown below. Then add a title to each of the 3 papers as follows: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. (To save time, you may want to have this already completed for them. However, it may also get their attention to do the folding and setting up themselves.)

Christianity		
<u>Know</u>	<u>Want to Know</u>	<u>Learn</u>

Once the papers are all folded and labeled, give your students a chance to fill in the “know” and “want to know” columns for each of the three papers. The “know” column is for them to write everything they already know about the topic (Christianity for example). The “Want to Know” column is for the children to write down everything they might want to know about the topic. Leave the “Learn” column blank until later in the lesson. This will help them organize the information better as they learn about these topics.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities

Message: *Love your neighbor as yourself.*

In order to help the children organize the information, have them make another tri-fold sheet labeled as seen below. Also, on your chart paper or easel, make a similar chart. As you go through each characteristic, write (or have a volunteer write) on the chart paper. Allow the children to write on their charts as well as the discussion goes on.

Please Note: The **BOLD** words below are what should be written on the chart or Venn diagram. The other words are there for you, the teacher, to fill in the blanks.



Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities - Continued

<u>Judaism</u>	<u>Christianity</u>	<u>Islam</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Called “Jewish” or “Jews” - “Yahweh”, but expressed as usually “Adonai (i.e. “Lord”) - Believe in only one God. - The Torah (1st 5 books of Moses in the Bible) is the foundation of the Jewish doctrine. - The people of “Israel” are the chosen people (chosen by God and obligated by the Torah) - Believe in an “end time”, including the return of the Jewish people to the land of their fathers. - Await the “Messiah” as a ruler sent by God. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Believe in the resurrection of the dead for judgment. - Star of David is the symbol of Jewish Congregations. - Judaism is mostly found to be practiced in Israel, USA and Europe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Called “Christians” - “God” or “Lord” - Believe in the Trinity, or God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. - Study the Holy Bible, Old and New Testament. - Believe that God already sent His son Jesus to earth who died for our sins. - Believe that Jesus will come again to take home the Bride of Christ. - Believe in the afterlife. - “Cross” is the universal sign of Christianity. - Christianity has spread all over the globe, due to the work of missionaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Called “Muslims” - “Allah” (Arabic for God.) is God. - Use the “Koran” as a cornerstone of their religion. - “Kabah” is the main holy place in Mecca.** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Islam is mostly practiced in North and East Africa, Middle East, and East Europe and Western Asia. <p>Islam requires fulfillment of the Pillars of Islam (five duties):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allah is the only God; Muhammad is His prophet. - Say a ritual prayer 5 times a day. - Support the Needy - Fast during the month of Ramadan - Make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in your life.

**The main holy place is the Kabah (i.e., the Arabic word for “dice” in Mecca, is a cube-shaped structure veiled with an enormous black cloth and containing the holy black stone, which the faithful touch and kiss. The Kabah was already worshipped before Muhammad’s time. Muslims believe that Abraham (from the Old Testament), whom they call Ibrahim, built the Kabah as the “house of God”.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam have one thing in common: **they all believe in the same God.**

(Background Information is from God’s Ways – Book 3)



Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

Activities:

The point of this activity time is to show that being respectful of others beliefs and being kind and loving toward them no matter what their beliefs is a moral issue and something as New Apostolic Christians we must also practice.

Note: Look up the following Bible verses together and discuss. It is not necessary that you do all of them. Do what you have time for in class. Choose which ones you feel are more important to cover, according to the understanding of your children.

Read Ephesians 4:32

“Be kind and tender to one another. Forgive each other, just as God forgave you because of what Christ has done.” (NIRV)

Discussion Questions:

1. According to this verse, how should we treat one another? *(Be kind, tender-hearted, forgiving.)*
2. Based on this verse, should we hold grudges, be rude, or not care about people? *(No.)*
3. Why is it that we are called to live like this? *(Because Jesus did.)*

Read 1 John 4:7-11

“Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born again because of what God has done. That person knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ How did God show His love for us? He sent His one and only Son into the world. He sent Him so we could receive life through Him. ¹⁰ What is love? It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we should also love one another.” (NIRV)

Discussion Questions:

1. What’s the key word in these verses? *(Love.)*
2. According to these verses, why should we love one another? *(Because God loved us first.)*
3. How does God show us His love? *(By sending His Son into this world to die for our sins.)*

Read John 13:34-35

³⁴ “I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you. ³⁵ If you love one another, everyone will know you are my disciples.” (NIRV)

Discussion Questions:

1. What does this verse say about how we should treat one another? *(Love one another.)*
2. What does it mean to treat someone in a loving way? *(Discuss.)*
3. What does this verse say will happen if we treat one another that way? *(People will know we believe in God.)*
4. When Christians fight, treat each other poorly, or are rude, what do you think people think? Is it possible they assume we don’t believe in God? *(Discuss together.)*

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

Read 1 Peter 3:8-9

⁸ “Finally, I want all of you to live together in peace. Be understanding. Love one another like members of the same family. Be kind and tender. Don't be proud. ⁹ Don't pay back evil with evil. Don't pay back unkind words with unkind words. Instead, pay them back with kind words. That's what you have been chosen to do. You can receive a blessing by doing it.” (NIRV)

Discussion Questions:

1. How does this Scripture say we should treat each other? (*Be understanding, kind hearted, etc.*) What do you think that would look like? (*Discuss together.*)
2. Does verse 9 condone or speak against revenge? Why do you think that is? (*Discuss.*)

Revenge is not an excuse to not be kind to someone. Neither is someone who is hard to get along with. How many of you know someone who is just hard to get along with. Maybe they're annoying, too loud, too self-conscious, or whatever. There's one in every group (if there's not one in your group of friends, it might be you!) Just because someone is difficult to get along with doesn't mean they are not worthy of your kindness.

Read Ephesians 4:2-3

² “Don't be proud at all. Be completely gentle. Be patient. Put up with one another in love. ³ The Holy Spirit makes you one in every way. So try your best to remain as one. Let peace keep you together.” (NIRV)

Discussion Questions:

1. Does this verse answer the question of whether or not we should put up with people who are hard to love? (*Yes.*) How so? (*By being gentle and patient and keeping the peace.*)
2. Why is this important, according to these verses (*Because the peace keeps everyone together as one....it preserves unity.*)

Tell the children that there are a ton of passages on kindness, niceness, and love. The message is clear: we should love one another. We should be kind to those who are hard to be kind to. We should not be rude or inconsiderate to anyone, whether we have differences or not.

(Some materials used for this lesson are adapted from www.teensundayschool.com)

Application to Real Life

Ask the children if they have ever heard of the “Golden Rule”. Look in your Bible and read **Matthew 7:12** together:

“In everything, do to others that you would want them to do to you.”

Ask: “Is there a commandment that says the same thing as this “Golden Rule?” Have the students look in their pinwheel folders if they need to. Lead them the very last one that Jesus said was one of the greatest of the Commandments: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Challenge your children to be kind to others, no matter what. Challenge them to practice this commandment and the “Golden Rule” each day, no matter who they interact with, no matter what they believe, no matter if they are Jewish or Christian or Muslim. We never want to criticize someone's beliefs. We want to always be positive and share what God has done for your life.

Application to Real Life – Continued

Remind the children that everyone has a bad day, but if they find themselves being rude, mean, or unkind they can always stop what they are doing and say a prayer to God asking Him to help them. God can help us be kind. We want the people around us to know that we believe in God and His Son because of the way we are acting and treating ALL others. **Love your neighbor as yourself.** (Message Statement)

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.
5. Which fruit of the spirit is talked about in today's lesson? (hint – see the message statement) Who can name all 9 fruit of the spirit? (See Galatians 6:22-23 as needed.)

Journal Reflection Questions

- What do you think it looks like to be a totally respectful person to others with different religious beliefs? Write about it.
- Choose one of the following Bible Verses about kindness or love. Look it up in your Bible and copy it into your journal. What does the verse mean to you? Write about it.

1 John 3:11	1 John 3:23	2 John 1:5
Romans 12:10	Galatians 5:22	1 Corinthians 4:13
Proverbs 11:17	Proverbs 14:21	

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson titled: **World Religions – Part 2** as well as 1 Corinthians 9:19-22, James 3:1-12, and James 5:7-20.
- Learn the memory verse: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."
-- Ephesians 4:32 (NIRV)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith # ____.
- Use your KWL Charts on Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Fill in the "LEARN" column with what you learned about these 3 religions. Bring them with you to class to compare next week these religions to 2 more.

World Religions – Part 2

1 Corinthians 9:19-22; James 3:1-12; James 5:7-20

Learning Objectives

1. The children will examine the basic characteristics of Hinduism and Buddhism.
2. The children will recognize the importance of respecting the beliefs of others.

Memory Verse: *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other,
just as in Christ God forgave you." -- Ephesians 4:32 (NIRV)*

Getting Started

(Choose One Activity)

Activity:

Give each child a piece of paper. Instruct them to do the following: "In four (4) words, describe what you believe in God." Give them time. Then share their answers.

Today we will learn about two religions that are different from Judaism, Christianity and Islam because they do not believe in God.

Make a "KWL" Chart:

For this activity, you will need 2 pieces of 8 ½ x 11" paper for each child. Have them turn their paper "sideways" so that the width is 11" and the height is 8 ½". Then have them tri-fold their paper, so that when they open their paper back up again, it will have 3 columns. Use pencils to draw lines down each column as shown below. Then add a title to each of the 2 papers as follows: Hinduism, Buddhism. (To save time, you may want to have this already completed for them. However, it may also get their attention to do the folding and setting up themselves.)

Hinduism		
<u>Know</u>	<u>Want to Know</u>	<u>Learn</u>

Once the papers are all folded and labeled, give your students a chance to fill in the "know" and "want to know" columns for each of the three papers. The "know" column is for them to write everything they already know about the topic (Hinduism for example). The "Want to Know" column is for the children to write down everything they might want to know about the topic. Leave the "Learn" column blank until later in the lesson. This will help them organize the information better as they learn about these topics.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities

Message: *Live your faith each day.*

In order to help the children organize the information, have them make a tri-fold sheet labeled as seen below. Also, on your chart paper or easel, make a similar chart. As you go through each characteristic, write (or have a volunteer write) on the chart paper. Allow the children to write on their charts as well as the discussion goes on.

(OR Have them make a Venn diagram to organize the information, drawing 2 overlapping circles. Label one circle as Hinduism, one as Buddhism, and the area where the circles overlap “Both”.)

Please Note: The **BOLD** words below are what should be written on the chart or Venn diagram. The other words are there for you, the teacher, to fill in the blanks.

Hinduism	Both	Buddhism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Religion originated in India, today also in Pakistan, Nepal, and other middle Asian countries. - Nature Religion, not based on an individual founder - Worship many gods (animals, gods, things) - The Veda – the Holy writings of the Hindus (written in Sanskrit) much of which is on the “eternal world law” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Believe in Reincarnation (animals, people, gods, etc.) - Belief that everything follows a birth to death cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law of Karma (everything comes back to you – good deeds to goodness, evil deeds to evil, either during your current or “future” life. - Believe in Nirvana – escape for reincarnation (considered the greatest freedom) - Do not believe in God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Founded on Indian prince Siddhartha Gautama “Buddha” - 4 Noble Truths: (all about “Misery”) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Truth of misery 2. Truth of the origin of misery 3. Truth of the elimination of misery 4. Truth that the elimination is the result of a methodical way that must be followed. - Wheel of Teaching (8 spokes symbolize the path of teaching that leads to Nirvana, the goal of redemption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has Spread in Asia - Emphasis on Tolerance for everyone - Believes that one can only achieve self-redemption as a monk.

(Background Information is from God’s Ways – Book 3)



Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

Activity Ideas:

Note: Look up the following Bible verses together and discuss. It is not necessary that you do all of them. Do what you have time for in class. Choose which ones you feel are more important to cover, according to the understanding of your children.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-22

¹⁹ I am free. I don't belong to anyone. But I make myself a slave to everyone. I do it to win as many as I can to Christ. ²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew. That was to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one who was under the law, even though I myself am not under the law. That was to win those under the law. ²¹ To those who don't have the law I became like one who doesn't have the law. I am not free from God's law. I am under Christ's law. Now I can win those who don't have the law. ²² To those who are weak I became weak. That was to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that in all possible ways I might save some.

In this passage from the Bible, we learn that Paul tried to understand different people so that he could tell them about God and His Son. Paul is a true example of someone who lived his faith. We have learned about 5 different faiths in the last 2 lessons. We as Christians also want to **live our faith**. By doing so we are able to tell others about our faith by our actions and words. In the book of James in the New Testament we learn about some guidelines when it comes to living out our faith:

Read James 3:1-12 - Watch Your Tongue

¹ My brothers and sisters, most of you shouldn't want to be teachers. You know that those of us who teach will be held more accountable. ² All of us get tripped up in many ways. Suppose someone is never wrong in what he says. Then he is a perfect man. He is able to keep his whole body under control.

³ We put a bit in the mouth of a horse to make it obey us. We can control the whole animal with it. ⁴ And how about ships? They are very big. They are driven along by strong winds. But they are steered by a very small rudder. It makes them go where the captain wants to go. ⁵ In the same way, the tongue is a small part of the body. But it brags a lot. Think about how a small spark can set a big forest on fire. ⁶ The tongue also is a fire. The tongue is the most evil part of the body. It pollutes the whole person. It sets a person's whole way of life on fire. And the tongue is set on fire by hell. ⁷ People have controlled all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea. They still control them. ⁸ But no one can control the tongue. It is an evil thing that never rests. It is full of deadly poison. ⁹ With our tongues we praise our Lord and Father. With our tongues we call down curses on people. We do it even though they have been created to be like God. ¹⁰ Praise and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers and sisters, it shouldn't be that way. ¹¹ Can fresh water and salt water flow out of the same spring? ¹² My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives? Can a grapevine bear figs? Of course not. And a saltwater spring can't produce fresh water either.

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of a time when you were hurt by something someone said? What about a time when you hurt someone?
2. Why does it not make sense for the same person to praise God one second and hurt someone the next?
3. If someone were to judge your faith simply by listening to what comes out of your mouth, would they think you were a Christian?

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

Read James 5:7-12 - Be Patient

⁷ Brothers and sisters, be patient until the Lord comes. See how the farmer waits for the land to produce its rich crop. See how patient he is for the fall and spring rains. ⁸ You too must be patient. You must stand firm. The Lord will soon come back. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, don't find fault with one another. If you do, you will be judged. And the Judge is standing at the door! ¹⁰ Brothers and sisters, think about the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. They are an example of how to be patient when you suffer. ¹¹ As you know, we think that people who don't give up are blessed. You have heard that Job was patient. And you have seen what the Lord finally did for him. The Lord is full of tender mercy and loving concern. ¹² My brothers and sisters, don't take an oath when you make a promise. Don't call on heaven or earth or anything else to back up what you say. Let your "Yes" be yes. And let your "No" be no. If you don't, you will be judged.

Discussion Questions:

1. How patient are you?
2. What is it we should be awaiting, according to verse 7? (the Lord's coming)
3. How does this passage speak to you directly?

Read James 5:13-20 – Prayer

¹³ Are any of you in trouble? Then you should pray. Are any of you happy? Then sing songs of praise. ¹⁴ Are any of you sick? Then send for the elders of the church to pray over you. Ask them to anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ The prayer offered by those who have faith will make you well. The Lord will heal you. If you have sinned, you will be forgiven. ¹⁶ So admit to one another that you have sinned. Pray for one another so that you might be healed. The prayer of a godly person is powerful. It makes things happen. ¹⁷ Elijah was just like us. He prayed hard that it wouldn't rain. And it didn't rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again. That time it rained. And the earth produced its crops. ¹⁹ My brothers and sisters, suppose one of you wanders away from the truth and someone brings you back. ²⁰ Then here is what I want everyone to remember. Anyone who turns a sinner from going down the wrong path will save him from death. God will erase many sins by forgiving him.

Discussion Questions:

1. Name different circumstances listed in this passage in which prayer is advised.
2. Do you expect results when you do pray? Why/why not?
3. How can prayer be an exercise in faith?

James is filled with practical ways to live out your faith. When you pray, ask God to help you live out your faith each day.

(Some materials used for this lesson are adapted from www.teensundayschool.com)

Application to Real Life

Look up and read the following verses together:

Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill can't be hidden. ¹⁵ Also, people do not light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand. Then it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ "In the same way, let your light shine in front of others. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will praise your Father who is in heaven.

Ephesians 2:9-10

⁹ It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it. ¹⁰ God made us. He created us to belong to Christ Jesus. Now we can do good things. Long ago God prepared them for us to do.

Ask the children: "What do these verses say about doing good things, being a light, or setting an example?" (*We should be one, live out our faith, do good works, etc.*) Remind the children that we are Christians, that we DO believe in God. We must do as our Heavenly Father tells us and be a light to the world and do good things to others, no matter what they believe. We do this by living our faith. (Message statement)

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse and explain it in your own words. Find it in the Bible.
2. Name the three parts of the Holy Trinity. Which one does the memory verse refer to?
3. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Journal Reflection Questions

- What one thing are you going to do today to live your faith better? Write about it.
- Think about the 5 religions you have learned about in the last few weeks. How have you changed since you have learned about what others believe? What have you learned about how to treat people of other faiths? Write about it.
- How can we show God's love to people who are different from us? Write about it.

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson titled: NAC Worldwide as well as Galatians 5:13, Matthew 20:28, and 1 Peter 4:10.
- Learn the memory verse: "I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'"
--Isaiah 6:8 (NIRV)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith # ____.
- Ask 3 people what a missionary is and write down what they say. Then look up the word "missionary" in the dictionary and write down the definition. Bring it to class.

NAC Worldwide

Galatians 5:13; Matthew 20:28; 1 Peter 4:10

Learning Objectives

1. The children will explore about the worldwide spread of the New Apostolic Church and its organizational structure.
2. The children will be able to explain what it means to serve others, and recognize that it is something they need to practice each day.

Memory Verse: *“I said, ‘Here I am. Send me!’” --Isaiah 6:8 (NIRV)*

Getting Started

“A Lesson in Serving”

Set up your room quite differently for today’s class. Make it seem extra special. If it is winter, each student who enters will have their coat “checked” and taken to a seat. If you don’t usually have food, provide some. Even if you do, make it a point to serve the students their food. Bring in some adult volunteers. If possible, dress them up like butlers and maids. The idea is to surprise the children with how well they are being served. Then ask them the following questions and discuss them together:

- How does it make you feel when you are waited on hand and foot?
- Let’s brainstorm together; how many ways are you served each day?
- By how many different people? (Parents, siblings, teachers, sponsors, friends, restaurant employees.)
- How often do you take their service for granted?
- How much time do you spend serving those same people?
- Do you think when we serve others it makes them feel the same way we feel when we are served?
- What is the goal of service, then?

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities

Message: *Find a way to serve others.*

Original Intentions of Missionaries:

- Teach others about Christianity (God, Jesus, etc.)
- Help others with their daily living (food, water, shelter.)

Today, our Apostles, brothers and sisters, and other ministers are still doing missionary work in many countries all over the world. Because of the work done by missionaries in the past hundreds of years:

- People are already familiar with God, Jesus and the basic beliefs of Christianity.
- Bibles have become available in many different languages for the inhabitants of the countries to be able to read and learn independently.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities - Continued

Our Apostles as missionaries are able to:

- Baptize souls with water and dispense the Holy Spirit through Holy Sealing.
- Offer help when necessary with their daily living (food, water, shelter, etc.)
- Work to prepare the people for the return of the Lord Jesus.

(Background Information is from God's Ways – Book 3)

Since the children will have this information in their “Parent Lesson”, when revisiting it in class, do so by asking questions. For example:

1. Why did people long ago originally go to other countries as ministries? *(To teach others about Christianity, and help them if they needed food, water, etc.)*
2. How does what missionaries from long ago did help our Apostles and ministers today as they travel to other countries? *(People already know about God and they may have access to a Bible that is in their language.)*
3. What do our Apostles do today when they go as missionaries to other countries? *(Baptize souls with water and the Holy Spirit, help the people with daily needs, and prepare their souls for the return of the Lord Jesus.)*

Read Isaiah 6:8 together in class:

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord. He said, “Who will I send? Who will go for us?” I said, “Here I am. Send me!”

Tell the children:

“Isaiah, as written in this verse is ready for action. His response, “Here am I! Send me!” shows his willingness to serve God, almost like a little child when he is so excited about something. Isaiah was called to serve God. God has also called you to do something. Some of those things are not unique because they are things that all Christians should do. Other things are specific to who you are and what your spiritual gifts are.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some obvious things that all Christians should make it a priority to do? *(Tell others about God and what He does in our lives; help those in need, etc.)*
2. What are some things you are spiritually and uniquely gifted to do that you need to step up and volunteer for? *(Discuss together. Have some ideas specific to each child just in case!)*

Today, God still needs people to go be missionaries and tell others about Him in other nations, go to places in our own country where the Church is not, or be a part of helping those in need, such as the homeless, orphans, and widows. He’s waiting for volunteers. He’s waiting for you and I to step up and say, “Hey! I’m here! I’ll go!”

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

“Service” ~ A Closer Look

Let’s look at some passages of scripture that talk about service: (NOTE: Practice looking up the passages....have a “contest” or competition and see who is able to find the verse quickly! Have fun!)

Galatians 5:13

“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.” (NIRV)

Matthew 20:28

“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (NIRV)

1 Peter 4:10

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.” (NIRV)

Discussion Questions:

1. What do these passages have to say about service? (NOTE: Make a list on the board.)
(We are called to serve, Jesus served us, there are a variety of ways we can serve, etc.)
2. What does the Matthew passage say is the main way Jesus served us? *(By giving his life.)*
3. How might that resemble the way we should serve? Should it be partial or temporary? *(We need to give our ALL in serving God through serving others. Discuss together.)*

(Some materials used for this lesson are adapted from www.teensundayschool.com)

Application to Real Life

For the “application” of this lesson, consider finding somewhere locally that you as a group (recruit other willing volunteers too) could go serve and use this lesson as a way of introducing that opportunity (a nursing home, hospital, etc.).

Below are some ways in which an individual or a group can serve others. In most cases you can do them absolutely free and in as little as an hour.

1. Go to a nursing home and visit the residents there. Just talk to them or prepare a small gift to give them.
2. Get a rack, some yard waste bags, and head off some fall and rake as many leaves as you can for elderly or disabled individuals in your community. If it’s winter shovel snow. If it’s summer mow their grass.
3. Go to a grocery store and be a volunteer cart pusher. Watch for people putting groceries in their cars and ask if you can take their carts for them.
4. Go to a local gas station as a group and offer to pump peoples’ gas and wash their windows. They’ll look at you like your crazy, but they might just let you do it.
5. Have a totally free car wash. Don’t accept donations. Don’t charge a dime. Just wash cars. It’ll bless others and be fun, too.
6. Get together with some friends and go grocery shopping for a needy family. Pitch in a few dollars each and see how far you can stretch the money. This is a great idea around Thanksgiving or Christmas too.

Application to Real Life - Continued

7. Have a date night for parents in your congregation and provide babysitting at no cost. Prepare games, crafts, and activities for the kids. Give parents at least 3 or 4 hours to go out together and enjoy some fellowship without their children.
8. Go to a children's hospital in your area and visit the kids there. Many places would let you put on a small program (games, skits, etc.). Those who are sick really need a boost and this is a great way to do it. Don't wait for a holiday—do it any time!

Decide as a group what "act of service" you would like to do together. You, the teacher, has to help make it happen!! Pick a date; coordinate with the children and parents all the details. Don't wait!

Also, challenge each of your children to find one way to serve someone else before the day ends. Maybe that means doing something at home, or just asking someone what you can do to help them. Don't forget that it might be hard work—but God has told us to serve others. Find a way to serve others. (Message Statement)

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Pick a fruit of the spirit – ask the children to explain what it means and give an example.
4. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
5. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Journal Reflection Questions

- Why do you think it is so hard today to get into the habit of serving people? Write about it.
- What are some ways YOU can serve people...even today? Write about it.
- If God asked you to do something that would not bring you notoriety, success, or wealth, how inclined would you be to do it? What should your motivation be to serve the Lord?

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson titled: "**Tolerance and Conformity**" as well as Daniel 3:1-29 and Daniel 6:1-28.
- Learn the memory verse: "...live together in peace. Be understanding. Love one another like members of the same family. Be kind and tender."
--1 Peter 3:8 (NIRV)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith #_____.
- Look up in the dictionary the words "tolerance" and "conformity". Then write in your own words what these words mean. Bring it to class.

Tolerance and Conformity

Daniel 3:1-29 and Daniel 6:1-28

Learning Objectives

1. The children will recognize that we are to treat others with tolerance and accept all people as being loved by God.
2. The children explore possible limitations with regards to tolerance and conformity.

Memory Verse: *“...live together in peace. Be understanding. Love one another like members of the same family. Be kind and tender.” --1 Peter 3:8 (NIRV)*

Getting Started

(Choose One Activity)

“Find out more about each other”

Place your children in groups of two (recruit a volunteer if needed). Ask them to talk to their partners to find out three things that they have in common or are similar. Then ask them to find three things that are different about each other.

“Revealing Colors”

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Activities → “Revealing Colors”

You will need a small bag of M&M’s for this activity. Each color M&M will have a different meaning, according to the color key. Please see the above website for detailed instructions.

As you enjoy the treat, discuss how everyone had different answers. Ask the children if they have ever treated someone poorly that was different from them? Maybe they had a different opinion, or liked different clothes, or lived life a little differently, or even had different tastes in music. How do we treat others that are different? (Discuss together.)

No matter which intro you chose above, do the following:

Make a list:

Give each child a blank piece of paper. Have them fold the paper in half and then open it up again. Draw a line down the crease of the paper to form two (2) columns:

<u>Tolerant People</u>	<u>Intolerant People</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Have empathy and understanding for others- Are humble- Are charitable (give to others)- Know very well the difference between good and bad, and right and wrong.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do not accept anything or anyone who is different from themselves.

Getting Started – Continued

Give the children a chance to write down their own characteristics for each column above first. Then talk about the points and let them correct or fill in their charts with more as the conversation continues.

Ask the children: **Where does someone learn to be “intolerant” from today? (TV, music lyrics, sees it at school, someone else has been intolerant towards us, etc. Discuss together.)**

Tell the children: *“Today we will examine tolerance more closely through the stories of the fiery furnace and the lion’s den, both of which are found in the book of Daniel.”*

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions

Message: *Respect the differences of others.*

NOTE: Review the story briefly. The children should use their Bibles as needed for reminders.

REVIEW: Daniel 3 ~ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

¹ King Nebuchadnezzar made a statue that was covered with gold. It was 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. He set it up on the flatlands of Dura near the city of Babylon. ² Then the king sent for the royal rulers, high officials and governors. He sent for the advisers, treasurers, judges and court officers. And he sent for all of the other officials of Babylon. He asked them to come to a special gathering to honor the statue he had set up.

³ So the royal rulers, high officials and governors came together. So did the advisers, treasurers, judges and court officers. All of the other officials joined them. They came to honor the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. They stood in front of it.

⁴ Then a messenger called out loudly, "Listen, you people who come from every nation! Pay attention, you who speak other languages! Here is what the king commands you to do. ⁵ You will soon hear the sound of horns and flutes. You will hear zithers, lyres, harps and pipes. In fact, you will hear all kinds of music. When you do, you must fall down and worship the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶ If you don't, you will be thrown into a blazing furnace right away."

⁷ All of the people heard the sound of the horns and flutes. They heard the zithers, lyres, harps and other musical instruments. As soon as they did, they fell down and worshiped Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue. They had come from every nation and language.

⁸ At that time some people who studied the heavens came forward. They spoke against the Jews. ⁹ They said, "King Nebuchadnezzar, may you live forever! ¹⁰ You commanded everyone to fall down and worship the gold statue. You told them to do it when they heard the horns, flutes, zithers, lyres, harps, pipes and other musical instruments. ¹¹ If they didn't, they would be thrown into a blazing furnace. ¹² But you have appointed some Jews to help Daniel govern Babylon and the towns around it. Their names are Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They don't pay any attention to you, King Nebuchadnezzar. They don't serve your gods. And they refuse to worship the gold statue you have set up."

¹³ Nebuchadnezzar burned with anger. He sent for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So they were brought to him.

¹⁴ The king said to them, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, is what I heard about you true? Don't you serve my gods? Don't you worship the gold statue I set up? ¹⁵ You will hear the horns, flutes, zithers, lyres, harps, pipes and other musical instruments. When you do, fall down and worship the statue I made. If you will, that's very good. But if you won't, you will be thrown at once into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to save you from my powerful hand?"

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king. They said, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we don't need to talk about this anymore.

Discussion Questions:

1. What were all the people commanded to do in this passage, and what was the punishment for refusing? (Worship the golden idol that King Nebuchadnezzar had constructed or be thrown into a blazing furnace)
2. What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego do? (*They refused to bow down to his idol.*)
3. Did they conform to the rules of the King? (*No*) Why or Why not? (*Discuss.*)

¹⁷ We might be thrown into the blazing furnace. But the God we serve is able to bring us out of it alive. He will save us from your powerful hand.

¹⁸ "But we want you to know this. Even if we knew that our God wouldn't save us, we still wouldn't serve your gods. We wouldn't worship the gold statue you set up."

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar's anger burned against Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. The look on his face changed. And he ordered that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. ²⁰ He also gave some of the strongest soldiers in his army a command. He ordered them to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Then he told his men to throw them into the blazing furnace. ²¹ So they were tied up. Then they were thrown into the furnace. They were wearing their robes, pants, turbans and other clothes.

²² The king's command was carried out quickly. The furnace was so hot that its flames killed the soldiers who threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into it. ²³ So the three men were firmly tied up. And they fell into the blazing furnace.

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet. He was so amazed he asked his advisers, "Didn't we tie three men up? Didn't we throw three men into the fire?"

"Yes, we did," they replied.

²⁵ The king said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire. They aren't tied up. And the fire hasn't even harmed them. The fourth man looks like a son of the gods."

²⁶ Then the king approached the opening of the blazing furnace. He shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, come out! You who serve the Most High God, come here!"

So they came out of the fire. ²⁷ The royal rulers, high officials, governors and advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire hadn't harmed their bodies. Not one hair on their heads was burned. Their robes weren't burned either. And they didn't even smell like smoke.

²⁸ Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "May the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be praised! He has sent His angel and saved His servants. They trusted in Him. They refused to obey my command. They were willing to give up their lives. They would rather die than serve or worship any god except their own God.

²⁹ "No other god can save people that way. So I'm giving an order. No one from any nation or language can say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. ³⁰ Then the king honored Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. He gave them higher positions in the city of Babylon and the towns around it.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the response of these men in verses 16-18? (*They didn't need to defend themselves, they weren't going to betray God.*)
2. In verse 19, what do we learn about the King's attitude toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? (*"It changed".*)
3. Out of rage, he ordered the furnace to be heated how many times hotter? (Seven times). The men were fastened tightly by the strongest soldiers and dropped into the furnace. The furnace was so hot, the soldiers died from the flames.
4. When the king looked, what did he see? (*Four men, walking around, not bound, and the fourth like "a son of the gods".*)
5. What did Nebuchadnezzar do next? (*Called them out of the furnace.*)
6. What were some observations about the men who came out of the furnace in verse 27? (*They were unburned, not a single hair was singed, their robes were not scorched, and they didn't even smell like smoke.*)

The response of the pagan Babylonians is praise. In verse 30, the King promotes the three men within his government. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to conform to the rules of the King because they had a strong faith and trust in God. The King however had no tolerance for the three men and their beliefs, and so he punished them by sending them into that burning furnace.

REVIEW: Daniel 6 ~ The Den of Lions

¹ It pleased Darius to appoint 120 royal rulers over his entire kingdom. ² He placed three leaders over them. One of the leaders was Daniel. The royal rulers were made accountable to the three leaders. Then the king wouldn't lose any of his wealth. ³ Daniel did a better job than the other two leaders or any of the royal rulers. He was an unusually good and able man. So the king planned to put him in charge of the whole kingdom.

⁴ But the other two leaders and the royal rulers heard about it. So they looked for a reason to bring charges against Daniel. They tried to find something wrong with the way he ran the government. But they weren't able to. They couldn't find any fault with his work. He could always be trusted. He never did anything wrong. And he always did what he was supposed to.

⁵ Finally those men said, "It's almost impossible for us to come up with a reason to bring charges against this man Daniel. If we do, it will have to be in connection with the law of his God."

⁶ So the two leaders and the royal rulers went as a group to the king. They said, "King Darius, may you live forever!" ⁷ All of the royal leaders, high officials, royal rulers, advisers and governors want to make a suggestion. We've agreed that you should give an order. And you should make sure it's obeyed. Here is the command you should give. King Darius, during the next 30 days don't let any of your people pray to any god or man except to you. If they do, throw them into the lions' den.

⁸ "Now give the order. Write it down in the laws of the Medes and Persians. Then it can't be changed." ⁹ So King Darius put the order in writing.

¹⁰ Daniel found out that the king had signed the order. In spite of that, he did just as he had always done before. He went home to his upstairs room. Its windows opened toward Jerusalem. He went to his room three times a day to pray. He got down on his knees and gave thanks to his God.

¹¹ Some of the other royal officials went to where Daniel was staying. They saw him praying and asking God for help. ¹² So they went to the king. They spoke to him about his royal order. They said, "King Darius, didn't you sign an official order? It said that for the next 30 days none of your people could pray to any god or man except to you. If they did, they would be thrown into the lions' den."

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

The king answered, "The order must still be obeyed. It's one of the laws of the Medes and Persians. So it can't be changed."

¹³ Then they spoke to the king again. They said, "Daniel is one of the prisoners from Judah. He doesn't pay any attention to you, King Darius. He doesn't obey the order you put in writing. He still prays to his God three times a day."

¹⁴ When the king heard that, he was very upset. He didn't want Daniel to be harmed in any way. Until sunset, he did everything he could to save him.

¹⁵ Then the men went as a group to the king. They said to him, "King Darius, remember that no order or law you make can be changed. That's what the laws of the Medes and Persians require."

¹⁶ So the king gave the order. Daniel was brought out and thrown into the lions' den. The king said to him, "You always serve your God faithfully. So may he save you!"

¹⁷ A stone was brought and placed over the opening of the den. The king sealed it with his own special ring. He also sealed it with the rings of his nobles. Then nothing could be done to help Daniel.

¹⁸ The king returned to his palace. He didn't eat anything that night. He didn't ask for anything to be brought to him for his enjoyment. And he couldn't sleep.

¹⁹ As soon as the sun began to rise, the king got up. He hurried to the lions' den. ²⁰ When he got near it, he called out to Daniel. His voice was filled with great concern. He said, "Daniel! You serve the living God. You always serve him faithfully. So has he been able to save you from the lions?"

²¹ Daniel answered, "My king, may you live forever! ²² My God sent his angel. And his angel shut the mouths of the lions. They haven't hurt me at all. That's because I haven't done anything wrong in God's sight. I've never done anything wrong to you either, my king."

²³ The king was filled with joy. He ordered his servants to lift Daniel out of the den. So they did. They didn't see any wounds on him. That's because he had trusted in his God.

²⁴ Then the king gave another order. The men who had said bad things about Daniel were brought in. They were thrown into the lions' den. So were their wives and children. Before they hit the bottom of the den, the lions attacked them. And the lions crushed all of their bones.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to the people from every nation and language in the whole world. He said, "May you have great success!

²⁶ "I order people in every part of my kingdom to respect and honor Daniel's God. He is the living God. He will live forever. His kingdom will not be destroyed. His rule will never end. ²⁷ He sets people free and saves them. He does miraculous signs and wonders. He does them in the heavens and on the earth. He has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

²⁸ So Daniel had success while Darius was king. Things went well with him during the rule of Cyrus, the Persian.

Discussion Questions:

1. What decree does Darius issue, and what was the punishment for refusing to obey? (*That only he should be prayed to, or be thrown into a lion's den.*)
2. What does Daniel do in response? (*Prays to the One True God, not Darius*)
3. Darius didn't want to punish Daniel, but he realized he had been tricked. What happens to Daniel anyway? (*He is thrown in a lions den.*)

Again, this is a story you've likely heard. Perhaps you didn't realize that King Darius had been tricked.

4. Darius is troubled. How does he respond that night? (*Goes home and doesn't eat, could not sleep.*)
Then, at the first light of dawn the next day, Darius rushes to the lion's den to see if Daniel's god saved him.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

5. What does Daniel say about his condition? (*“My God sent his angel...he shut the mouths of the lions, they have not hurt me”.*)
6. What is Darius’s response? (*He’s overjoyed and has the people who tricked him thrown in the lion’s den, and they died there.*)

The stories are incredible examples of God’s deliverance. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego remained faithful and, as a result, are saved by God, even though they were being judged by intolerant people and punished for being different.

Application to Real Life

Talk together about things we are required to conform to in our lives (for example: rules at school, follow the laws of the government, etc.). No matter what, we all have situations where we are required to “obey” or follow rule of some sort. Sometimes it can be difficult to know when to conform or “obey”, and when to stand firm in our beliefs.

We’ve all gotten lost, and we’ve all used a map. But you probably didn’t realize that life is sort of like that, too. Obeying is kind of like a map to be consulted in life. Life is a journey, and we need directions to follow so we don’t feel lost.

Questions to Discuss Together:

1. There are lots of people and situations that will call for your obedience, and be sure about one thing - you’re always obeying SOMEONE. Why is it better to obey God rather than anyone else?
2. What are some things that we might face today that we do NOT want to conform to in our lives? Name some. (Make a list. For example: alcohol, drugs, stealing, hurting others physically, rude or inappropriate language, etc.)
3. How can obeying other influences, whether they are friends at school, stuff online, rumors and gossip, etc. bring you down?
4. How can obeying other voices in your life lead you to being lost?

If you find yourself getting lost in life, try obedience. But the only way you can obey is by knowing the map. In the life of a Christian, the Bible is a guiding force. In the Bible we can find the Ten Commandments God gave us, along with the 2 that Jesus said were the greatest of them. (Encourage the children to pull out their pinwheel folders or have them posted already on the wall in your class so they can read and compare.) A good rule of thumb when you don’t know what to do is, take a look at the commandments. If what you are thinking of doing, or following, or obeying breaks one of the commandments, then you shouldn’t go along with what others want. Stand your ground. Stand firm in your beliefs.

Remind the children that we want to treat people who are different from us with tolerance, and see that they too are loved by God. Whether their appearance or opinions or religion is different, we want to have tolerance. We expect others to respect our religious beliefs and our faith, and how we choose to practice our faith, and therefore we must do the same to them. We must respect the views of other people. We need to respect the differences of others. (Message Statement)

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. What Holy Sacrament is most related to today's lesson? Why?
4. What is forgiveness? How does it relate to celebrating Holy Communion? Discuss.
5. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
6. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Activity Ideas

"EGG" Discussion

See: www.daniellesplace.com → search the resource room for "Martin Luther" → locate the file "wordsmartinpre.cfm" → see "crafts and activities - #4"

You will need to bring in a brown egg and a white egg to class, along with a bowl and some paper towels. You will use the eggs to discuss people are different. Please see the above website for a guide to the discussion.

Remind the children that this is just like people, we look different and we may even think differently, but we all experience the same feeling of love, hate, jealousy, and fear. Jesus doesn't care how we might appear on the outside; He only cares how we are on the inside. We should never judge people because they are different than us, even if they have a different religion than we do.

Journal Reflection Questions

- Which of God's laws do you think are pretty easy to follow? Which are hard? Write about it.
- What can you do if you find yourself in a situation in which you are being pressured to do something you know is not right? Who can you turn to? Write about it.

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson titled: **Community and Fellowship** as well as 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.
- Learn the memory verse: "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."
--1 Corinthians 12:27 (NIRV)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith #_____.
- What is a community? Write about it or illustrate what you think it is. Bring it to class to share.

Community and Fellowship

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Learning Objectives

1. The children will recognize that the community and fellowship of God's children provides strength and security.
2. The children will explore the concept of working together in the community of the congregation in order to help God's work to grow.

Memory Verse: *"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."
--1 Corinthians 12:27 (NIRV)*

Getting Started

(Choose One Activity)

"Strength in Numbers"

See: www.teensundayschool.com → activities → "Strength in Numbers"

You will need about 8 to 10 volunteers to help with this challenge. You will lie flat on the floor, and then ask the volunteers one by one to try to pick you up off the floor. It is okay if it causes a laugh or two, but none of them should be able to lift you up. (You may want to stop after three or four attempts.) Please see the above website for detailed instructions and a guide to the discussion.

"Become All Things" Object Talk

See: www.kidssundayschool.com → grade school → object talks → "Become All Things"

You will need to bring in a folding lawn chair to class. Please see the above website for detailed instructions and a guide to the discussion.

Conclusion: A lawn chair does not actually become a fine piece of furniture, or a park bench. Likewise, the Apostle Paul did not change into a Gentile when he was witnessing to the Gentiles. However, he knew they needed to hear the good news about God and His Son in a way they would understand. This is what Paul did, and this is somewhat how the lawn chair works. It gives us what we need at the time, without really changing. That is why to me, the lawn chair is so special. It reminds me of how I should help others learn about God, even when they are different from me.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions

Message:

Gather and grow.

Note: Use your chart paper or white board to make the following lists together. Give children opportunities to get up and write. Use questions to prompt them to come up with the following information.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

<u>What Groups do you belong to?</u>	<u>Benefits of Groups to us:</u>	<u>What can we do to develop a positive community in our church?</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family - Circle of friends - A class at school - Congregation - Etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide protection and help - Provide care and security - Provide joint discussions and activities - Provide a sense of belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pray for others - Be considerate of others - Forgive ALL others and do not bear a grudge - Talk about our faith and experiences - Do our best to bring joy to others - Visit the sick

You may want to have the children brainstorm a 4th list on paper regarding what they can do in the congregational community:

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Visit the brothers and sisters who are sick
- Make gifts for the elderly or sick
- Decorate the altar beautifully
- Bake cookies and share them with the congregation
- Etc.

NOTE: Let the ideas come from the children. Offer one or two as examples if needed, but do your best to pull the ideas out of their creative minds. Encourage them to think outside the box.

You will need to bring in a picture of the human body – from a book, a print out, a poster, etc. Show it to the children and tell them that we will need it for our Bible reading today. SAY: “For today’s lesson on community and fellowship, we are going to look into the New Testament again and see what we can find. Let’s look up and read together”:

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

¹² There is one body. But it has many parts. Even though it has many parts, they make up one body. It is the same with Christ. ¹³ We were all baptized by one Holy Spirit into one body. It didn't matter whether we were Jews or Greeks, slaves or free people. We were all given the same Spirit to drink.

¹⁴ The body is not made up of just one part. It has many parts. ¹⁵ Suppose the foot says, "I am not a hand. So I don't belong to the body." It is still part of the body. ¹⁶ And suppose the ear says, "I am not an eye. So I don't belong to the body." It is still part of the body.

¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If the whole body were an ear, how could it smell? ¹⁸ God has placed each part in the body just as he wanted it to be. ¹⁹ If all the parts were the same, how could there be a body? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts. But there is only one body.

²¹ The eye can't say to the hand, "I don't need you!" The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²² In fact, it is just the opposite. The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are the ones we can't do without. ²³ The parts that we think are less important we treat with special honor. The private parts aren't shown. But they are treated with special care. ²⁴ The parts that can be shown don't need special care.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

But God has joined together all the parts of the body. And he has given more honor to the parts that didn't have any. ²⁵ In that way, the parts of the body will not take sides. All of them will take care of each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part shares in its joy.

²⁷ You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the illustration of the human body give insights into the body of Christ in this passage? (*There are many parts to it, but it is one unit*)
2. Verse 15 uses humor to illustrate a part of the body seeking not to belong...can it do it? (*no...when you're a part of the body, you just belong to it*)
3. How does verse 26 relate to the church?
4. Look at verse 27. What does it mean to you?

It should be noted that in verse 27, the “you” is plural...he’s talking to the whole group. Then, in the last part of that verse, he acknowledges that we are individuals that are part of the group. But we shouldn’t have our own concerns at the front of our minds—the good of the group comes first. After all, when one part of the body hurts, we all hurt.

Application to Real Life

In order to be a part of this “community” and fellowship in the congregation, there are two main things that are required of us in being a member of our community:

- 1. GATHER**
- 2. GROW**

Gather:

One of the biggest responsibilities if you want to be a member of the church community is to show up. We are expected to gather together. That is part of what makes us a community.

Look up together in the Bible **Hebrews 10:25** and read it as a class:

“Let us not give up meeting together. Some are in the habit of doing this. Instead, let us cheer each other up with words of hope. Let us do it all the more as you see the day coming when Christ will return.” (NIRV)

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think the author of Hebrews urges people to meet together?
2. In this text, some have given up on that habit...how is it easy to do that?
3. How often do you gather with the congregational community? What priority do you think it takes in your life and schedule?

If you want to belong to a family, it’s expected you reside at home. If you want to belong to a team or a club, you have to go to practices and meetings. If you want to belong to the church, it makes sense that you would gather with other believers and be with the congregation.

You may be busy, but here’s challenge number one—be with the church. Gather with others who believe in God and do that as often as possible.

Application to Real Life – Continued

Grow:

You also have to grow. You have to grow in two ways: grow individually and help the church grow too. Look up in your Bibles together and read **Acts 2:43-47**.

⁴³ Everyone felt that God was near. The apostles did many wonders and miraculous signs. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together. They shared everything they had. ⁴⁵ They sold what they owned. They gave each other everything they needed. ⁴⁶ Every day they met together in the temple courtyard. In their homes they broke bread and ate together. Their hearts were glad and honest and true. ⁴⁷ They praised God. They were respected by all the people. Every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways did the individual members of the church attempt to grow, according to this passage? *(They shared, they broke bread, they were glad and sincere in heart, they praised God and had a good reputation with people, etc.)*
2. In what ways do you attempt to grow in your own spiritual life?
3. How is gathering with the congregation a part of this growth? Are they related?
4. How is each individual member responsible for their own growth?
5. With all these individuals attempting to grow, what was the end result, according to verse 47? *(The Lord added to the church.)*

When individuals commit to growing in their own walk with God (through some of the stuff we've talked about like Bible study, prayer, etc.), the whole church grows. People are added to it, and the church becomes more effective in accomplishing its mission to reach and teach others about God and His work. Remember, the job of the church is to gather and grow.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Activity Ideas

Choose One Activity

The Tortoise and the Hare (turtle and rabbit)

See: www.teensundayschool.com → lessons → "Victory in Christ - Christian Partnership" → scroll down the page to the story.

Alternate Discussion Questions:

1. Who would you consider your partners? (These might be teammates, family members, or close friends.)
2. What about being partners is difficult? *(Sometimes its disagreements, selfishness, and lack of unity that leads to rocky partnerships.)*

SO, there is strength that comes from working together with others toward a common goal. Isn't this what a community is? *(Discuss together.)*

Activity Ideas – Continued

“Class Project”

Work together as a class group to come up with and plan an activity that would allow the class to contribute to and benefit the congregational community. This can be completed over the next few weeks, but should be done BEFORE the holiday season. Let the children come up with the idea, and guide THEM to make the plans. You (the teacher) be the facilitator or coach.

Journal Reflection Questions

- If you could do anything for God knowing that you could not fail, what would you do? Write about it.
- What do you dream about doing for God and His work that for some reason you haven't done yet? How can you make your dream a reality? What/Who do you need to help you? Write about it.
- What (if anything) is stopping YOU from serving the Lord? Think about it first. Then write about it.

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson titled: **Holidays and Special Services/Thanksgiving** as well as Matthew 6:25-34, 1 Timothy 6:17, and 1 Thessalonians 5:18.
- Learn the memory verse: “Give thanks no matter what happens.”
--1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIRV)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith # ____.
- Take a piece of paper and number it from 1 to 100. For this week, every day try to think of 20 things you are thankful for. It will get harder as you get further along on your list, for sure. Are you up to the challenge? Bring your list to class.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

Read Matthew 6:25-34 ~ Do Not Worry

"I tell you, do not worry. Don't worry about your life and what you will eat or drink. And don't worry about what you will wear. Isn't there more to life than eating? Aren't there more important things than clothes?"

"Look at the birds of the air. They don't plant or gather crops. They don't put away crops in storerooms. But your Father who is in heaven feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they are?"

"Can you add even one hour to your life by worrying? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the wild flowers grow. They don't work or make clothing. But here is what I tell you. Not even Solomon in all of his glory was dressed like one of those flowers.

"If that is how God dresses the wild grass, won't he dress you even better? After all, the grass is here only today. Tomorrow it is thrown into the fire. Is your faith so small?"

"So don't worry. Don't say, 'What will we eat?' Or, 'What will we drink?' Or, 'What will we wear?' People who are ungodly run after all of those things. Your Father who is in heaven knows that you need them. "But put God's kingdom first. Do what he wants you to do. Then all of those things will also be given to you. "So don't worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will worry about itself."

1. What things does the Bible tell us not to worry about? (Having something to eat, drink, clothes to wear, etc.)
2. How can we be sure God will provide enough food for us? (Because we are valuable to Him, and He says He will take care of us. We need to have faith in His word.)

Read 1 Timothy 6:17

"Command the people who are rich in this world not to be proud. Tell them not to put their hope in riches. Wealth is so uncertain. Command those who are rich to put their hope in God. He richly provides us with everything to enjoy."

1. What is wrong with putting your hope in wealth or money? (It's uncertain, or temporary. Only God can give us everything we need.)
2. Why do you think God wants to give us the things we need? (Answers will vary....Discuss together.)

Read 1 Thessalonians 5: 18

"Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank Him because you believe in Christ Jesus."

1. What kinds of things can you be thankful for? (Discuss – allow the children to either make their own list or make one together. Pictures are great too!)
2. What kind of circumstances may make it difficult to be thankful? (Think about the Pilgrims, and all they had to endure for example.)
3. What does this verse tell us about when we should be thankful? (We should always be thankful to God, in any circumstance or situation because we know God will take care of us.)

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

Holidays and Special Services in the New Apostolic Church:

For 2010, we will have our USA Thanksgiving service on the Sunday before **Thanksgiving** in each congregation, rather than on the actual Thanksgiving Day. There are other holidays that are observed and focused on throughout the year in the New Apostolic Church:

New Year's Day Service – January 1st

Palm Sunday – the Sunday before Easter

Good Friday – the Friday before Easter

Ascension Day – 40 days after Easter Sunday

Pentecost – the 7th Sunday after Easter Sunday

Advent Season – Celebrated on each of the 4 Sunday's before Christmas Day.

Christmas Day Service - December 25th

Closing of the Year Services – (For 2010 this will be on the last Sunday of the year before January 1st.)

Service for the Departed – celebrated internationally 3 times per year on the first Sunday of March, July and November.

TEACHING IDEA: To help the children better visualize and understand the Holidays and Special Services, use a piece of poster board or your easel or chart paper and draw the 2011 Calendar with 12 boxes, labeling each box with one month (Jan, Feb, Mar, etc.). Use bright colored post-its. Ask the children what holidays or special services they know of. As they name them, give them a post-it to write it on, and have them get up and put the post-it on the "calendar". Keep adding to the "calendar" until all the days are covered. This will allow for further discussion as needed.

Application to Real Life

Talk with the children about the pilgrims again. They must have been so thankful that God kept them fed and warm in the cold winters a very long time ago. They had lots of things going on that could have made them be angry with God. It was so cold outside. Maybe they didn't have enough food. But they were still thankful and took time to "give thanks" to God no matter what was happening around them. God today is still the same God. He wants us to be happy and He gives us many things to enjoy each day. There are 4 ways to show God if we are truly thankful for what He has provided for us:

1. How we look.
2. The way we act.
3. What we say to others.
4. The way we feel inside.

The same thing is true if we do not appreciate God's blessings in our lives and if we do not thank Him. It is also easy for others to see by:

1. How we look.
2. The way we act.
3. What we say to others.
4. The way we feel inside.

Application to Real Life

Talk with the children about both scenarios. Practice the “how we look” and “what we say” parts. Talk about the “how we act” in both of the scenarios. Remind the children that we need God’s blessings in our lives, and this starts with a thankful heart. We always want to “Give thanks no matter what happens.” --1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIRV) (Memory Verse for this lesson.) And we must remember to put God first in our lives so that we never have to worry about anything. God will take care of us too.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse. Explain what it means to you.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Activity Ideas

Choose One Activity

“Thank-you Notes for God”:

Bring in any materials needed for the children to make a “home-made” thank you note to God. (stickers, fancy stencils, colored pencils, special paper, etc.) Have the children take their “reasons to praise God” list from the Intro activity, and use their list to make a thank-you note for God. No one has to see their note. It should be sealed in an envelope when it is completed. If you like, the children could decorate their envelopes and they may be used in the altar decorations (even if hidden) for the Thanksgiving Day altar. If some children prefer not to write, encourage them to draw pictures. Let them know that it is their chance to write a personal expression of thanks to God for all He has done for them, AS WELL AS all He will do for them in their future. Play some soft music if possible, to help get those creative juices flowing. Give the children plenty of time to complete their project.

“Bible Turkey Hunt”:

See: www.kidssundayschool.com → grade school → games → “Bible Turkey hunt”

You will need large envelopes (one for each child), glue sticks, Bibles, turkey puzzle pieces (see the above website) and extra pieces as needed for this activity.

To begin this game, give each child an envelope with one of the puzzle pieces inside. The children will open their envelopes and look up the verse on the back of the puzzle piece inside. As the children read their verse and have a short discussion, the piece will be glued into place. Have a large sheet of paper or poster board 11" x 14" to paste the pieces to complete a finished turkey to look like the picture above. Extra pieces if needed can be glued on as well to complete the picture. After the puzzle is complete, share with the children how thankful we are that God provides for us, but how we must also do our part and gather his blessings.

Before class, you will need to print the three turkey puzzle piece pages on medium card stock and cut out all of the pieces. On the back of each piece, write one of the Bible verse references (Write only the Bible reference, not the actual verse.). Please see the above website for more detailed instructions and a guide to the discussion.

“Giving and Receiving”:

See: www.kidssundayschool.com → grade school → activities → “Giving and Receiving”

You will need: Treats or small prize for each child, paper bags or envelopes, a bandage strip, two pennies, one raisin, a small piece of cloth, a used pencil, and one nail for this activity. Before class, put each item above into small brown bags, or envelopes. During the activity, you will give these gifts to half of the children in class. You may wish to decorate the containers with ribbons, etc. to make the packages more attractive. (IF you need more people to make this activity more interesting, recruit your youth to volunteer, or anyone else who might be willing. Just ask!) For more detailed instructions, please see the website above. Follow the discussion guide as listed.

God’s Many Blessings:

See: www.kidssundayschool.com → grade school → object talks → “God’s Many Blessings”

For this activity, you will need a water glass (about 2 1/2” in diameter), a pitcher of water, a spoon, some cheerios®, and 10 to 20 marbles or large coins for blessings. You will also need to practice this a few times before the class. Please see the above website for detailed instructions.

Journal Reflection Questions

- Write a letter of thanks to God. Talk to Him in your letter, and tell Him what lives in your heart as you prepare for Thanksgiving.
- Is it always easy to be thankful in your heart for what you have or something you received? Why do you think it is important to have a thankful heart? Write about it.

Homework Ideas

- Read at home the lesson titled: **Spiritual Habits – A Relationship with God** and Psalm 42:1-2. Also read Genesis 3, Exodus 40, 1 Kings 5, and John 1.
- Learn the memory verse: "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?"
--Psalm 42:2 (TNIV)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith #_____.
- Think about the following question: How close do you believe you are to God? Give this question some thought before coming to class.



“Four People”:

See: www.teensundayschool.com → lessons → “Spiritual Habits – Having a Relationship with God” → scroll down for the activity.

Give each child a piece of paper (or they could do this activity in their journals). The children will need to write down the names of four people in their life that they are the closest to. They will analyze that list further, examining how often they see the person and how much time they spend with the person. Please see the above website for detailed instructions.

Tell the children to be as honest as they can. Keep this information when you are done, because we will use it later on.

(Note: You may want to write the 3 bulleted points above on your white board or easel to help your students who are more visual learners.)

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities**Message:*****God wants a relationship with YOU.***

(Note: For this week’s lesson, the scripture, related questions and activities are all combined into one section in order to have a more complete and systemic look at developing a relationship with God.)

Read Psalm 42:1-2 (NIRV)

¹ A deer longs for streams of water.

God, I long for you in the same way.

² I am thirsty for God. I am thirsty for the living God.

When can I go and meet with him?

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the author of that Psalm express his need for a relationship with God? *(He longs for that relationship, he thirsts for it.)*
2. Is that kind of desire for God evident in your own life? *(Give the children time to think and then discuss together.)*
3. What do you think it would take for you to desire a relationship with God in that way? *(Let the children think about this. They may not have an answer, and that is ok.)*

FOUR PEOPLE Activity (Continued):

Have the children get out their list of the people they are closest to again.

Ask the following questions:

- Who would like to share a couple of the people on their list? (Let everyone share one or two people, if they’re willing.)
- Why do you think you are close to those people?
- Of those people, how much time do you spend with each?
- How many days do you see them in a week?
- How often do you communicate with them during the day?
- How much do you find yourself talking to them?

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

Share with the children: There is a correlation between how much time we spend with people and how deep our relationship with them is. It would not be good in a marriage if a husband and a wife never saw each other. A friendship would suffer if one of the friends moved away. It's not to say the relationship would end—it would just be harder to be as close.

If we are going to be people who follow our Heavenly Father, we need to try to be deep followers, not just fans of His. We need to thirst for a relationship with Him and His Son, just like the psalmist did. If we are honest, we probably know that our relationship with God is not as strong as it should be. We all got have growing to do.

More Discussion Questions:

1. If you were making a list of friends, where would God fit on your list? Who is a closer friend to you than Him right now?
2. How can you measure “how close” you are to God?
3. How much time do you spend communicating with God?
4. How many days a week do you “hang out” with God?
5. How often do you find yourself thinking about God?

Application to Real Life

Look up in your Bibles and read together: **Leviticus 26:12.**

“I will walk among you. I will be your God. And you will be my people.” (NIRV)

Talk with the children about the following:

God's presence in our lives is something we should want to have. It is not enough that He is a part of our life—but that God is our life. Our life should center on Him. We know from scripture that God walked in the Garden with Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). We also know that God commanded ancient Israel to construct a tabernacle so His presence could dwell there (Exodus 40). Later, a temple was built, and in it was the Holy of Holies, where the presence of God would dwell (1 Kings 5). Most importantly, God came to earth to dwell with us when He sent His Son Jesus (John 1). God wants to have a relationship with you. The question is, how badly do you want to have a deeper relationship with Him? God loves us right where we are. But that doesn't mean He wants us to stay there. He desires for us to grow. We want to grow into a deeper relationship with God.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Journal Reflection Questions

- If God looked at your life today would He find a person who is stale in their relationship with Him, or fresh and active? Write about it.
- How badly do you want to have a relationship with God? Enough to work at it? Write about it.

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson titled **Spiritual Habits – Studying the Bible (Part 1)** as well as Genesis 2:7-22, Genesis 12:1-7, Exodus 3:1-10 and Acts 9:1-8.
- Learn the memory verse: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..."
--2 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith # ____.
- Spend some time looking in the book of Proverbs in your Bible. Choose a verse to share with your class. Write it down and bring it with you to class.



Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

¹⁰ A river watered the garden. It flowed from Eden. From there it separated into four other rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first river is the Pishon. It winds through the whole land of Havilah. Gold is found there. ¹² The gold of that land is good. Onyx and sweet-smelling resin are also found there.

¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon. It winds through the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river is the Tigris. It runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵ The Lord God put the man in the Garden of Eden. He put him there to work its ground and to take care of it.

¹⁶ The Lord God gave the man a command. He said, "You can eat the fruit of any tree that is in the garden. ¹⁷ But you must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you do, you can be sure that you will die."

¹⁸ The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." ¹⁹ The Lord God had formed all of the wild animals. He had also formed all of the birds of the air. He had made all of them out of the ground. He brought them to the man to see what names he would give them. And the name the man gave each living creature became its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all of the livestock. He gave names to all of the birds of the air. And he gave names to all of the wild animals. But Adam didn't find a helper that was right for him. ²¹ So the Lord God caused him to fall into a deep sleep. While the man was sleeping, the Lord God took out one of his ribs. He closed up the opening that was in his side. ²² Then the Lord God made a woman. He made her from the rib he had taken out of the man. And He brought her to him.

Discussion Questions:

1. What type of relationship does it seem like God had with Adam & Eve? (*Discuss together.*)
2. How direct was their contact? (*God was actually able to be with and talk with Adam and Eve.*)
3. In what ways is that contact different from ours today? (*Discuss.*)

Genesis 12:1-7 (NIRV) ~ God Chooses Abram

¹ The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country and your people. Leave your father's family. Go to the land I will show you. ² "I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you. I will make your name great. You will be a blessing to others. ³ I will bless those who bless you. I will put a curse on anyone who calls down a curse on you. All nations on earth will be blessed because of you."

⁴ So Abram left, just as the Lord had told him. Lot went with him. Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran. ⁵ He took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot. They took all of the things they had gotten in Haran. They also took the workers they had gotten there. They set out for the land of Canaan. And they arrived there. ⁶ Abram traveled through the land. He went as far as the large tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the people of Canaan were living in the land.

⁷ The Lord appeared to Abram at Shechem. He said, "I will give this land to your children after you." So Abram built an altar there to honor the Lord, who had appeared to him.

Discussion Questions:

1. What type of relationship does it seem like God had with Abram? (*Answers will vary. Discuss.*)
2. How direct was their contact? (*God was able to talk with Abram.*)
3. In what ways is that contact different from ours today? (*Discuss together.*)

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

Exodus 3:1-10 ~ The Lord Sends Moses to Save His People

¹ Moses was taking care of the flock of his father-in-law Jethro. Jethro was the priest of Midian. Moses led the flock to the western side of the desert. He came to Horeb. It was the mountain of God.

² There the angel of the Lord appeared to him from inside a burning bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire. But it didn't burn up. ³ So Moses thought, "I'll go over and see this strange sight. Why doesn't the bush burn up?" ⁴ The Lord saw that Moses had gone over to look. So God spoke to him from inside the bush. He called out, "Moses! Moses!" "Here I am," Moses said. ⁵ "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals. The place you are standing on is holy ground." ⁶ He continued, "I am the God of your father. I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. And I am the God of Jacob." When Moses heard that, he turned his face away. He was afraid to look at God.

⁷ The Lord said, "I have seen my people suffer in Egypt. I have heard them cry out because of their slave drivers. I am concerned about their suffering." ⁸ "So I have come down to save them from the Egyptians. I will bring them up out of that land. I will bring them into a good land. It has a lot of room. It is a land that has plenty of milk and honey. It is the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites." ⁹ "And now Israel's cry for help has reached me. I have seen the way the Egyptians are beating them down." ¹⁰ So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh. I want you to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. They are my people."

Discussion Questions:

1. What type of relationship does it seem like God had with Moses? (*Answers will vary. Discuss.*)
2. How direct was their contact? (*Discuss.*)
3. In what ways is that contact different from ours today? (*Discuss together.*)

Acts 9:1-8 ~ Saul Becomes a Believer (Remind the children that we are in the New Testament now.)

¹ Meanwhile, Saul continued to oppose the Lord's followers. He said they would be put to death. He went to the high priest. ² He asked the priest for letters to the synagogues in Damascus. He wanted to find men and women who belonged to the Way of Jesus. The letters would allow him to take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ On his journey, Saul approached Damascus. Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground. He heard a voice speak to him. "Saul! Saul!" the voice said. "Why are you opposing me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus," he replied. "I am the one you are opposing." ⁶ Now get up and go into the city. There you will be told what you must do." ⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there. They weren't able to speak. They had heard the sound. But they didn't see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eyes, but he couldn't see. So they led him by the hand into Damascus.

Discussion Questions:

1. What type of relationship does it seem like God had with Saul (later Paul)?
2. How direct was their contact?
3. In what ways is that contact different from ours today?

Conclusion:

Adam, Abraham, Moses and Saul all had a close relationship with God. But since we are able to read the Bible today, we are able to understand some things that each of these individuals could not, simply because we are able to read about and know the "bigger picture". Studying the Bible is another important Spiritual habit that we need to develop so that we can grow closer to God each day. Develop the habit of reading your Bible! (Message.)

Application to Real Life

If we want a closer relationship with God, we need to develop the habit of reading and studying the Bible. There are a variety of ways that you can begin this habit:

A Proverb a Day (Optional Activity)

Challenge your children to read one chapter of Proverbs for today. This is a book in the Old Testament that is full of wisdom and guidance for our lives. There are 31 chapters of Proverbs. So if you read one chapter a day, by the end of the month you will have read the entire book! One idea is, if it is the 15th of the month, read Proverbs 15, etc. (Give the students a chance to read the chapter for the day of the month you are currently on. Then invite them to share one thing they've learned with the rest of the class.)

A Verse in the Mirror

Pass out some index cards to the children and have them look up and actually write down one or two of their favorite verses. Challenge them to keep one card up each week on their mirror at home, and then replace it with a new one once the first one is committed to memory. Whether you're brushing your teeth or combing your hair everyone spends enough time in front of the mirror that they could read some Scripture while they are there. As you get ready in the morning, repeat the verse in your mind. This is a great way to memorize some Bible verses that have special meaning for you.

Read Slow/Think Slow (Optional Activity)

Have the children do this activity. Pick a Psalm for them to read and have them take it verse by verse, contemplating what they're reading. Then have them share what they learned. They might have different insights, but this practice will show them how easy it is to do this.

Challenge your children to choose one of these ideas and begin practicing it at home this week. Remind them that we want them to develop the (permanent) habit of reading their Bible. We want them to continue to draw closer to God each day.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse. Do you believe what it says? Explain your reasoning.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible! Make it a race!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Journal Reflection Questions

- How much do you read the Bible? How do you think this affects your relationship with the Lord? Write about it.
- Do you now feel the need to change your Bible study habits? Write about it.

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson titled: **Spiritual Habits – Studying the Bible (Part 2)** as well as 1 Timothy 3:16-17, Romans 15:4, Acts 2:36-37 and Hebrews 12:11.
- Learn the memory verse: “By using Scripture, a man of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing.” --2 Timothy 3:17 (NIRV)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith # ____.
- Do you like to read the instructions first or are you one that likes to dive right in without getting instructions? Think about it. Be ready to share with your class.



Spiritual Habits – Studying the Bible (Part 2)

1 Timothy 3:16-17, Romans 15:4, Acts 2:36-37, Hebrews 12:11

Learning Objectives

1. The children will be able to explain the importance of regular Bible study and reading.
2. The children will examine how to apply to their lives what they study in the Bible.

Memory Verse: *“By using Scripture, a man of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing.” --2 Timothy 3:17 (NIRV)*

Getting Started

“Follow the Instructions”:

See: www.teensundayschool.com → activities → “Follow the Instructions”

You will need a large box of Lego® toys, a 100 piece jigsaw puzzle, masking tape and OR deck of cards.

(NOTE: You may need extra volunteers for this activity. Modify as necessary.)

Break up into small groups of about four or five. (OR just have one smaller group, depending on your class circumstances.) Give each team one task with a set of instructions. Let the students know that they have a task to complete, and only a certain amount of time to do so. The last team finished must clean up the mess. Please see the above website for detailed instructions and a guide to the discussion.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities

Message: *Take time each day to learn from the words that were inspired by God.*

Follow up from last week’s lesson: Studying the Bible (Part 1). Ask the following questions:

- So, how many of you tried some Bible reading this past week?
- How did it go?
- Which of the methods we talked about last week did you try?
- Which ones worked the best?
- Which ones were the hardest?
- If you struggled to read your Bible again this past week, what made it difficult? Honestly, what was hindering you from doing it like you wanted to?

Tell the children that today we want to go one step deeper into studying the Bible. Our goal is to help you develop this spiritual habit of reading your Bible for the rest of your life.

NOTE: Look up and read together each of the following Bible verses in today’s lesson.

1 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶ God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. ¹⁷ By using Scripture, a man of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

Tell the children: “These verses give evidence that the Bible is the inspired word of God. They also tell us that the Scriptures are useful for our lives. Did you ever think about that? The Bible is not a collection of stories that are pointless. The verses we read don’t just apply to when they were written—they have meaning for us today too.

Discussion Questions:

1. According to these verses, what are the Scriptures good for? (*Teaching, correcting, and training us do what is right – i.e. in “righteousness”.*)
2. What is the ultimate goal of this training, according to verse 17? (*That we would be equipped to do good works or “every good thing”.*)

Reading the Bible can make a difference in your life. We don’t read the Bible just because God said to, or just because our minister or youth leaders thinks we should, or so we can check it off our list and feel like a better person. The Bible is meant to change us. The Bible is also useful for: teaching us, improving us, correcting us, and instructing us. “Let’s take a closer look.”

TEACHING

The Bible is a great resource for teaching us things. However, there are limits on what it can teach us. If you want to know how many calories are in a cheeseburger or how far it is from China to England, the Bible doesn’t have much to say. There is much teaching on many other subjects however, that help us.

Romans 15:4

⁴ Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. The Scriptures give us strength to go on. They cheer us up and give us hope.

The Scriptures were written for this very purpose: to instruct us and to give us hope.

Discussion Question:

1. Can you think of a time when you were reading the Bible and you learned something new? What was it?

IMPROVING

The Scriptures aren’t written to offend us and make us angry, but to wake us up and cause us to make improvements in our lives. The Bible is not like another self-help book, but when we come face to face with the words that were inspired by God, and take them to heart, we should be changed for the better.

Discussion Questions: (*Discuss together. Answers will vary.*)

1. Can you think of a time when you read the Bible and felt like you changed for the better?
2. Did the outcome of this experience with the verse(s) you read in your Bible bring an improvement of some kind in your life?

CORRECTING

When we study the Bible and understand what it is saying, we may need to make corrections in our lives. The words that have been inspired by God are not so plentiful that we should take them for granted. When we come into contact with God’s instructions, we should be ready to be corrected and make ourselves better.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

Acts 2:36-37

³⁶ "So be sure of this, all you people of Israel. You nailed Jesus to the cross. But God has made him both Lord and Christ." ³⁷ When the people heard this, their hearts were filled with shame. They said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

This passage precedes the more popular Acts 2:38, where Peter instructs the people to be baptized. In these verses, though, we see correction first-hand.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the words of God, through His servant Peter, in verse 36? (*That Jesus is the Christ.*)
2. How did this affect the people in verse 37? (*Their hearts were filled with shame.*)
3. What did the people ask upon realizing their mistakes? (*"What should we do?"*)

When we read the Bible, what we should really ask each time we're finished is "what shall we do?"

INSTRUCTING

The last way 2 Timothy 3:16 says that the Bible is helpful is because of the training (or instructing) it offers—specifically teaching us what it means to be righteous.

Ask the children: "If you want to solve math problems, what do you study about? (*Math*) If you want to be an engineer, what kind of school do you go to? (*A good engineering college*) If you want to be great at a musical instrument, who do you learn from? (*You train under a master musician*) In the same way, if you want to know how to live a life that is pleasing to God, you need to study the Bible. Most of all, you should study the life of Jesus, the one true example of how we should live."

The word "training" can also be translated as "discipline." No one pleases God in everything that He does. In order to change, it takes training, discipline, and hard work.

Hebrews 12:11

¹¹ No training seems pleasant at the time. In fact, it seems painful. But later on it produces a harvest of godliness and peace. It does that for those who have been trained by it.

Discipline and training may not be fun at the time, but later we can reap a great reward. It is worth our time and effort to read our Bible if it helps us to draw closer in our relationship with God.

Application to Real Life

We learned today that the Bible is good for everything in our lives: teaching, improving, correcting, and instructing. But how do we actually apply what we read in our Bibles to our lives? "What should we do?" (As we just read about in Acts.) Challenge your children this week to read their Bibles and as they read them, ask themselves each time, "What should I do?" Maybe they read a Proverb every day last week. At the end of that exercise this week, remind them to ask themselves, "What do I need to do about what I just read?" Maybe they wrote some verses down and put them on their mirror. Maybe they read them when they were getting ready for school. For this week, encourage your children to ask themselves: "How can I put this into practice TODAY?" when they are done reading their verse(s).

Application to Real Life – Continued

PRACTICE TOGETHER: *(Do this with your students so they can practice.)*

Find a passage from the Bible that you think your children would benefit from hearing. Maybe your group has struggled to be one unified group, or maybe they are struggling with something in particular like peer pressure or gossip. Look up a verse that would be helpful to them and give them time to read it on their own. *(If time permits, let your students find their own quiet place to complete this activity.)*

Ask them to read the passage 2-3 times and then, when they're done, to write down in their journals or on a piece of paper their answer to the question, "What should I do?" Give them a few minutes to do this on their own before you pull everyone back together. Then ask each student to share their response to the following questions:

- What did you come up with for something you should do after reading this passage?
- Was it hard to identify a take-away message like that? Why/why not?
- How do you see this as being difficult with other passages?
- How easily could you make the practice of asking, "What should I do?" a Spiritual Habit in your life?

Remind the children that everything we read in our Bibles is helpful for one of those things 4 things: teaching, improving, correcting, or instructing. If the answer to the "What should I do?" question is not obvious, it may just be because you don't understand that verse fully. Take your time, read it again and again. These insights don't always come instantly. Ask advice from someone else you trust. If you are reading the New King James version, try the New International Readers Version of the Bible, or a children's Bible, if possible. When you pray, ask God to open your eyes and your heart so that you can learn from the verses you read.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Journal Reflection Questions

See the "practice together" exercise above in the "Application to Real Life" section. This could be your Journal entry for the day. Use www.biblegateway.com for help in finding a verse.

Teachers will need to provide the students with a Bible Verse to use (see Application to Real Life Section for complete instructions).

Students: read the passage 2-3 times and then write down in your journal the answers to the following questions:

- What is the Bible passage telling you to do? (What is the "take away" message?)
- Was it hard to identify a take-away message like that? Why or why not?
- Do you think this would be difficult to do after reading other verses in your Bible? Why or why not?
- Will you make this practice a Spiritual Habit in your life, by asking "What should I do?" after spending time reading your Bible? Why or why not?

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson titled: **Spiritual Habits ~ Prayer** as well as Matthew 6:5-13, Acts 1:14 & 2:42, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Mark 1:35, Mark 6:46, and Matthew 6:6.
- Learn the memory verse:
“The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together. They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed.” --Acts 2:42 (NIRV)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith # ____.
- How often do you pray? Keep a prayer log. During the week, each time you say a prayer to God (even in your thoughts); write down the day and the approximate time of your prayer. Bring your prayer log to class.



Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

DID YOU KNOW? If you searched the Bible for the word “pray” or “prayer”, there are 365 verses in the Bible that have either of these words written in it. Prayer is an important part of our New Apostolic Christian lives and something we should know (at least) a little bit about.

NOTE: Look up and read together each of the following Bible verses in today’s lesson.

Matthew 6:5-13

⁵ "When you pray, do not be like those who only pretend to be holy. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners. They want to be seen by others. What I'm about to tell you is true. They have received their complete reward.

⁶ "When you pray, go into your room. Close the door and pray to your Father, who can't be seen. He will reward you. Your Father sees what is done secretly.

⁷ "When you pray, do not keep talking on and on the way ungodly people do. They think they will be heard because they talk a lot. ⁸ Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need even before you ask him.

⁹ "This is how you should pray.

(The following is taken from the New King James Version of the Bible, to be consistent with how we recite the Lord’s Prayer in the divine service.)

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come.

Your will be done
On earth as *it is* in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.

¹³ And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Jesus say our attitude should be like when we pray? (*Humble, not showing off.*)
2. If God knows what we need before we ask, why do you think we pray? (*Discuss together.*)
3. If you could summarize the Lord’s Prayer (verses 9-13) into a couple statements, what would they be?

The goal of prayer is not to simply rattle off a bunch of requests (we want this, please do that, etc.). Instead, prayer is a way to connect with God. Maybe God tells us to pray (even though He knows what we’re going to say) because He loves us, plain and simple. He wants to have a relationship with us. Remind the children that this is what developing these Spiritual Habits is about: building up our relationship with God.

Acts 1:14

¹⁴ They all came together regularly to pray. The women joined them too. So did Jesus' mother Mary and his brothers.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

Acts 2:42

⁴² The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together. They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed.

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the priority of prayer in the early church, based on these two verses? *(It was a high priority.)*
2. How often did they devote themselves to prayer? *(Continually, constantly.)*
3. Acts 2:42 describes the lifestyle of early Christians. If you were to describe your lifestyle, or the lifestyle of our class, in one verse, would it sound like this? *(Discuss together.)*
4. What is the priority of prayer in your life? *(Let the children reflect on this question in their journals at the end of the lesson.)*

Our next verse is short, but direct and powerful.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

¹⁷ Never stop praying.

Discussion Questions:

1. How often does this verse say we should pray? *(It says we should never stop.)*
2. What do you think it means to pray without ceasing? *(Discuss together.)*
3. How often do you pray? *(Use this opportunity to help the children learn to find and make the time to talk to God. Discuss together.)*

Tell the children: “Some of us may already pray a lot. But we all have growing to do. So, how do you start having better conversations with God? Let’s look at some ideas on how to start a habit of prayer in your own life.”

PLACE & TIME:

We often read that Jesus got up early in the morning to pray. He did this not because we have to get up early, but because it was at this time he was able to get off by Himself, which was important. (See Mark 1:35; 6:46)

Mark 1:35 ~ Jesus Prays in a Quiet Place

³⁵ It was very early in the morning and still dark. Jesus got up and left the house. He went to a place where He could be alone. There He prayed.

Mark 6:46

⁴⁶ After leaving them, He went up on a mountainside to pray.

If you want to develop a habit of prayer in order to grow in your relationship with God, you do need to decide upon a good time and place to pray. Maybe it’s first thing in the morning. Maybe it’s at the end of the day. Where you pray also matters. If you try to pray while watching television, it might not work out so well. Do you need to get off by yourself? Go to your room? Spend time outside?

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions and Activities – Continued

Matthew 6:6

⁶ "When you pray, go into your room. Close the door and pray to your Father, who can't be seen. He will reward you. Your Father sees what is done secretly.

Jesus tells us in this verse (Matthew 6:6) to go off by ourselves to talk to God. So wherever you pray, try to find a place where you can really concentrate.

Optional Activity:

Have everyone in the class start to talk loudly with one another. They can say anything—their ABC's, singing songs, or talking about their own stuff. Then, instruct two people to have a conversation in the middle of this setting. (Recruit volunteers as needed to make this work.) The point will be clear—it's hard to talk and hard to hear when everything around you is stirring.

Application to Real Life

The following is meant to help your children with the concept of prayer developing their relationship with God. Use your easel or white board to reinforce the points. Label the top of the board "Helpful Hints for Prayer" or something similar. As you go through these, write them down on the list, and encourage the children to take notes in their journals or on another paper so that they can remember them when they go home. Add to the list as well, with any other suggestions that your children make during the discussion.

Ideas to help you with PRAYER and developing a relationship with God:

1. *Make a Prayer List*

Keep a prayer list on your computer, phone, or even on a piece of notebook paper. Maybe there's a list of friends you are praying for. Post your list in your locker at school. Perhaps there's a place you go to pray. Keep your list there.

2. *Pray Out Loud*

Praying out loud changes the way you feel when you pray. It can also help you concentrate, which is a good thing. Find a quiet place to go, and try it.

3. *Prayer Walks*

Go on a walk when you pray. Praying outside, in nature, or maybe while you listen to some appropriate music can help you connect with God on multiple levels.

Ask the children: "How many of you have tried any of these things? How did they work? Have you tried anything else that works well for you?" (*Discuss together.*)

Remind the children that we want to live a life full of prayer. We learned in today's lesson to never stop praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17). All of us have knee-jerk reactions to things in life. If our parents get onto us, we often rebel. If a teacher is hard on us, we shut down. If a friend is mean to us, we feel hurt. What if your "knee-jerk reaction" in every situation was to pray? What if, instead of having a formal prayer for every situation, you were constantly in conversation with God in your heart? Talk about this together as a class. How would that change your relationships with God?

End your class time together by giving students a few minutes to practice their new habits. Give them more time than usual, and let them know when they are finished praying that they can leave class.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Journal Reflection Questions

- What would a lifestyle of “prayer” look like in your day-to-day? Be specific. Write about it.
- How might you find your attitude changing if you adopted a lifestyle of prayer? What kind of effect do you think it might have on your life? Write about it.
- Consider your current schedule. Decide on a time each day that you can spend a few minutes in prayer with God. Commit to your “prayer time” with God each day for 30 days. Do you think you can do this task? Why or why not.

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson titled: **A Visit from the Wise Men** as well as Matthew 2:1-12 and Luke 2.
- Learn the memory verse:
“...I am the light of the world. Those who follow me will never walk in darkness. They will have the light that leads to life.” --John 8:12 (NIRV)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith #_____.
- What was the best present you ever received, and why? What was the worst present you ever received, and why? Write it down or draw a picture. Bring it to class to share.

Christmas

Matthew 2:1-12, Luke 2

Learning Objectives

1. The children will be able to retell the story of the Wise Men's visit to see the baby Jesus.
2. The children will explore their own spiritual gifts and how they might use them to serve God.

Memory Verse: *"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us."
--Romans 12:6 (TNIV)*

Getting Started

"My Best and Worst Gift":

See: www.teensundayschool.com → lessons → "Spiritual Gifts – What is a Spiritual Gift?" → scroll down to find the activity.

You will ask the children questions about the best and worst gifts they ever received. Tell the children that in today's lesson, we will learn about the Wise men and the gifts they brought to the Baby Jesus. We will also talk about the spiritual gifts that we have been given and how we can use them to serve God.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions

Message: *Share your gifts.*

(Note: Teachers may want to review the events of the Birth of Jesus, i.e. the Christmas Story – See Luke Chapter 2 as needed. Ask the children where they think the story would be found – Old or New Testament. Then find together Luke Chapter 2 and read them the story. If you do not have a Children's Bible or an NIRV translation, you may wish to print the story below and read it for the children.)

Luke 2 - Jesus Is Born

In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a census be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. Everyone went to their own towns to be counted.

So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. He went there with Mary to be counted. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby.

While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the baby to be born. She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were looking after their sheep. An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said, "May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!"

The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over. The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

Matthew 2 ~ The Wise Men Visit Jesus

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea while Herod was the king. After Jesus was born, some Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the baby who has been born to be king of the Jews? When we were in the east, we saw his star. Now we have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard about his new king of the Jews, he was very upset. Everyone in Jerusalem was worried too. So Herod called together a meeting of all the chief priests and teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ was going to be born.

"In the town of Bethlehem in Judea," they replied. "This is what the prophet has written about in the scriptures: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are certainly not the least important among the towns of Judah. A ruler will come out of you. He will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'

— *(Micah 5:2)*

Then Herod called for a secret meeting with the Wise Men. He found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. He then sent the Wise Men to Bethlehem. He said, "Go and look carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, come tell me. Then I can go and worship him too."

After the Wise Men had listened to the king, they went on their way. They saw the same star they had seen when they were in the east. It was ahead of them. It finally stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. The Wise Men went to the house. There they saw the child with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped the child. Then they opened their treasures. They gave him gold, incense and myrrh.

But God warned the Wise Men in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their country on a different road.

Discussion Questions:

1. Wise men came from the east looking for Jesus. What did they follow to find him? (A Star.)
2. What did they want to do when they found Jesus? (To worship Him and bring Him gifts.)
3. What did the visitors bring with them? (Treasures or gifts of gold, incense and myrrh.)
4. Did you know Jesus is sometimes called the "Light of the World"? Why do you think he's called this? (Answers will vary. Discuss this together with the children.)
5. How can we shine like a light for Jesus and for others every day? (Discuss together.)
6. What does it mean to be wise? (Share homework with their definitions and discuss.)
7. What does our "message" statement mean when it says "wise men still seek Him?" (Discuss together.)

Application to Real Life

Receiving spiritual gifts from God is like receiving a gift at Christmas in a way. Everyone gets a present and the gift is specifically designed for that person. But unlike Christmas presents, our spiritual gifts are never meant to be re-gifted. As we've seen, spiritual gifts are a little more than being able to sing, play sports, or be a good listener. Yet those things, when used to glorify God, can be Spiritual Gifts, too. God does not want us to keep our gifts to ourselves. That is not why He gave them to us. We are given our spiritual gifts to help us to serve God in our lives. We are able to use our gifts to bring blessing to others too.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Activity Ideas with Discussion Questions

Explore the Concept of "Spiritual Gifts":

Look up together and read the following Bible verses in class. As you read them together, make a list on your easel or white board of all the Spiritual Gifts that are mentioned in them. If a gift is mentioned more than once, put a check mark by it. At the end of the exercise, add up the number of gifts that are listed.

Romans 12:6-8 (NIRV)

⁶ We all have gifts. They differ in keeping with the grace that God has given each of us. Do you have the gift of prophecy? Then use it in keeping with the faith you have. ⁷ Is it your gift to serve? Then serve. Is it teaching? Then teach. ⁸ Is it telling others how they should live? Then tell them. Is it giving to those who are in need? Then give freely. Is it being a leader? Then work hard at it. Is it showing mercy? Then do it cheerfully.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NIRV)

⁷ The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all. ⁸ To some people the Spirit gives the message of wisdom. To others the same Spirit gives the message of knowledge. ⁹ To others the same Spirit gives faith. To others that one Spirit gives gifts of healing. ¹⁰ To others he gives the power to do miracles. To others he gives the ability to prophesy. To others he gives the ability to tell the spirits apart. To others he gives the ability to speak in different kinds of languages they had not known before. And to still others he gives the ability to explain what was said in those languages. ¹¹ All of the gifts are produced by one and the same Spirit. He gives them to each person, just as he decides.

Activity Ideas with Discussion Questions – Continued

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIRV)

¹¹ He is the One who gave some the gift to be apostles. He gave some the gift to be prophets. He gave some the gift of preaching the good news. And he gave some the gift to be pastors and teachers. ¹² He did it so that they might prepare God's people to serve. If they do, the body of Christ will be built up.

¹³ That will continue until we all become one in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son. Then we will be grown up in the faith. We will receive everything that Christ has for us.

There are THREE THINGS to remember as consider Spiritual Gifts and the Bible verses you just read:

1. EVERYONE is gifted or has been given Spiritual Gifts. (Romans 12:6)
2. YOUR gifts are yours for a reason. (Romans 12:6)
3. Gifts are given to be GIVEN BACK. (1 Corinthians 12:7)

Journal Reflection Questions

- What are some ways that you think the spiritual gifts can bless others? Write about it.
- Look over the list of spiritual gifts that you found with your class in the exercise. When you survey this list, do you see gifts you think you might have? Which ones? Think of at least one way you can use your gift to be a blessing to others. Write about it.

